A New Combination in Ampelocissus (Vitaceae), a Victim of Historic Deforestation in Nicaragua

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ABSTRACT. A neotype is selected for Vitis javalensis Seemann, and V. javalensis is transferred to Ampelocissus. Ampelocissus costaricensis Lundell is reduced to synonymy under Ampelocissus javalensis (Seemann) W. D. Stevens & A. Pool, comb. nov. Changes in vegetation of the Javalí gold and silver mines region (Santo Domingo/La Libertad) of Chontales, Nicaragua, the original published locality of V. javalensis, are discussed.

In 1869, Berthold Seemann described Vitis javalensis Seemann based on material observed in the Department of Chontales, Nicaragua in the vicinity of the Javalí gold and silver mines. Living material was gathered and delivered to horticulturist William Bull of King's Road, Chelsea, England (Seemann, 1869). J. E. Planchon transferred Vitis javalensis to Cissus as Cissus javalensis (Seemann) Planchon, where it was included in his monograph of Ampelideae under "Cissus.-Species pleraque dubiae" as a "nomen tantum" (Planchon, 1887). Bull's retail list of new Plants, ann. 1870, p. 5, was cited in reference. In J. A. Lombardi's manuscript Fl. Neotrop. Monogr. for Vitaceae-Gêneros Ampelocissus, Ampelopsis e Cissus (in press), Lombardi treats Cissus javalensis (Seemann) Planchon under "Nomes duvidosos e taxa excluídos." A holotype, Seemann s.n., assumed to be at BM, was not located.

consistent with Lundell's description (Lundell, 1937) and specimens of *Ampelocissus costaricensis* Lundell, with the exception that the hairs of the leaves of the latter are better described as arachnoid or floccose.

The genus Ampelocissus is not otherwise known from Nicaragua. Ampelocissus costaricensis is a species apparently currently restricted to wet, evergreen forests below 500 m in the Provinces of Limón, Costa Rica, and Bocas del Toro, Panama. The habitat of this region is similar to the presumed habitat of the Javalí mines region of Chontales, Nicaragua, at the time when Seemann made his collections, 1866-1871. Both Thomas Belt (1888) and Seemann (Anon., 1869) describe this as an area of high rainfall and rich forests. We have discovered 15 additional species collected in the region of the Javalí mines during this period. Most of the species range from Nicaragua into South America and are currently known from much wetter forests than those which now occur in the mines region. All but two of these species, including the one in question, are currently found in Nicaragua, but they tend to be found in the wet forests of Zelaya and Río San Juan Departments, or in remnant cloud forests of western Nicaragua, especially Cerro Oluma, Cerro Mombachito, Volcán Mombacho, and Volcán Maderas. Belt's and Seemann's historical narratives, and the modern distribution of the species historically known from the Javalí mines region, suggest that the Cordillera Chonteleña, from southern Matagalpa through Boaco, Chontales, and Río San Juan Departments, has become dramatically drier in the last 150 years. Deforestation, for mining timbers, charcoal, and grazing land, has clearly changed the landscape directly and has probably indirectly changed the general climate of the region. What was once apparently wet, evergreen forest is now mostly scrubby savanna with patches of dry forest on rocky slopes, grading into cloud forests at higher elevations. The vegetation of the southernmost part of the Cordillera, in Río San Juan Department, is less altered but not well known. It is possible that future collection in this area will result in the re-

In our efforts to prepare a written flora for Nicaragua, we are attempting to account for all names based on Nicaraguan material. Herbarium material of Vitis javalensis collected by Seemann was sought at the British Museum, where the primary set of Seemann's Nicaraguan material is housed, without success. Illustrations of Vitis or Cissus javalensis published by Seemann or Bull were also sought, again without success. Seemann described Vitis javalensis as a species with simple leaves with acute apices, cordate bases, mucronately-dentate margins, "beautifully" velutinous adaxial surfaces and purplish abaxial surfaces, and bright scarlet flowers. This description does not correspond to any Central American species of Cissus or Vitis. However Seemann's description is

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discovery in Nicaragua of species historically known from the Javalí mines region.

NEOTYPIFICATION AND SYNONYMY

We assume, due to the failure of our own searches in addition to the failed previous attempts by Planchon and Lombardi, that it is unlikely that any original material of Vitis javalensis exists, and the selection of a neotype is therefore necessary (Greuter et al., 1994, Art. 9.6). On the basis of Seemann's description, a neotype is here selected, V. javalensis is transferred to Ampelocissus, and Ampelocissus costaricensis is placed in synonymy.

Ampelocissus costaricensis Lundell, Publ. Carnegie Inst. Wash. 478: 215. 1937. Syn. nov. TYPE: Costa Rica. Limón: Hacienda de Zent, without date (fl), United Fruit Company 383 (holotype, US).

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